

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. (Currently amended) An assembly for processing wood chips, comprising:
 - a drum disposed so as to rotate about a generally horizontal axis and spinning at a rate of about 50 rpm or more, said drum including a plurality of outwardly extending blades; wherein said blades comprise a leading face with at least a first face section that extends in a first direction and at least a second face section extending at a forward angle relative to said first section; and
 - wherein output from said drum, when an input stream of wood chips is fed to said drum, covers an arc of at least 90° when viewed from a position along said horizontal axis spaced from said drum.
2. (Original) The assembly of claim 1 wherein said drum spins at 150 rpm or more.
3. (Canceled)
4. (Original) The assembly of claim 1 wherein said arc is generally downwardly facing.
5. (Original) The assembly of claim 1 wherein said drum has a core surface with a non-circular cross-section.
6. (Original) The assembly of claim 1 further comprising a motor operatively connected to said drum and supplying rotational power thereto.

7. (Original) The assembly of claim 1 further comprising a feed chute disposed upstream from said drum and supplying said input stream of wood chips to said drum.

8. (Original) The assembly of claim 7 wherein said feed chute comprises a baseplate and a plurality of divider walls moveably mounted to said baseplate, wherein said divider walls control the relative flow ratios of said input stream to a first side portion, a center portion, and a second side portion of said drum.

9. (Original) The assembly of claim 1 further comprising a container for receiving said output.

10. (Currently amended) The assembly of claim 1 further comprising a feed chute disposed upstream from said drum and supplying said input stream of wood chips to said drum, a motor operatively connected to said drum and supplying rotational power thereto, wherein:

~~said blades comprise a leading face with at least a first face section that extends in a first direction and at least a second face section extending at a forward angle relative to said first section;~~

said feed chute comprises a baseplate and a plurality of divider walls moveably mounted to said baseplate, wherein said divider walls control the relative flow ratios of said input stream to a first side portion, a center portion, and a second side portion of said drum; and

said drum spins at 150 rpm or more.

11. (Currently amended) An assembly for processing wood chips, comprising:
 - a drum disposed so as to rotate about a generally horizontal axis and spinning at a rate of about 50 rpm or more, said drum including a plurality of outwardly extending blades, wherein said blades comprise a leading face with at least a first face section that extends in a first direction and at least a second face section extending at a forward angle relative to said first section;
 - wherein an output stream of wood chips from said drum covers an arc of more than 90° when viewed from a position along said horizontal axis spaced from said drum when an input stream of wood chips is fed to said drum; and
 - said output stream causing a pile of wood chips to be formed a packing density factor of at least 1.20.
12. (Original) The assembly of claim 11 wherein said drum spins at 150 rpm or more.
13. (Canceled)
14. (Original) The assembly of claim 11 wherein said arc is generally downwardly facing.
15. (Original) The assembly of claim 11 further comprising a motor operatively connected to said drum and supplying rotational power thereto.

16. (Original) The assembly of claim 11 further comprising a feed chute disposed upstream from said drum and supplying said input stream of wood chips to said drum.

17. (Original) The assembly of claim 16 wherein said feed chute comprises a baseplate and a plurality of divider walls moveably mounted to said baseplate, wherein said divider walls control the relative flow ratios of said input stream to a first side portion, a center portion, and a second side portion of said drum.

18. (Original) The assembly of claim 11 further comprising a container for receiving said output.

19. (Original) The assembly of claim 11 wherein said packing density factor is at least 1.25.

20. (Currently amended) The assembly of claim 11 further comprising a feed chute disposed upstream from said drum and supplying said input stream of wood chips to said drum, a motor operatively connected to said drum and supplying rotational power thereto, wherein:

~~said blades comprise a leading face with at least a first face section that extends in a first direction and at least a second face section extending at a forward angle relative to said first section;~~

~~said feed chute comprises a baseplate and a plurality of divider walls moveably mounted to said baseplate, wherein said divider walls control the relative flow ratios of said input stream to a first side portion, a center portion, and a second side portion of said drum; and~~

~~said drum spins at 150 rpm or more.~~

21. (Original) An assembly for processing wood chips, comprising:
 - a drum disposed so as to rotate about a generally horizontal axis and spinning at a rate of about 50 rpm or more, said drum including a plurality of outwardly extending blades; and
 - said blades comprising a leading face with at least a first face section that extends in a first direction and at least a second face section extending at a forward angle relative to said first section.
22. (Original) The assembly of claim 21 said blades wherein said first and second sections are generally planar.
23. (Original) The assembly of claim 21 wherein said first section extends outwardly away from a core of said drum.
24. (Original) The assembly of claim 21 wherein said first direction is generally radial with respect to said axis.
25. (Original) The assembly of claim 21 wherein said drum spins at 150 rpm or more.
26. (Original) The assembly of claim 21 further comprising a feed chute disposed upstream from said drum and supplying said input stream of wood chips to said drum.
27. (Original) The assembly of claim 26 wherein said feed chute comprises a baseplate and a plurality of divider walls moveably mounted to said baseplate, wherein said divider walls control the relative flow ratios of said input stream to a first side portion, a center portion, and a second side portion of said drum.

28. (Original) The assembly of claim 21 further comprising a container for receiving said output.

29. (Original) The assembly of claim 28 wherein said container is selected from the group consisting of a train car, a ship, a barge, a trailer, a storage bin, and a digestion chamber.

30. (Original) The assembly of claim 21 wherein said forward angle is in the range of 25° to 45°.

31-39. (Canceled)

40. (New) An assembly for processing wood chips, comprising:

a drum disposed so as to rotate about a generally horizontal axis and spinning at a rate of about 50 rpm or more, said drum including a plurality of outwardly extending blades;

wherein output from said drum, when an input stream of wood chips is fed to said drum, covers an arc of at least 90° when viewed from a position along said horizontal axis spaced from said drum; and

a feed chute disposed upstream from said drum and supplying said input stream of wood chips to said drum, wherein said feed chute comprises a baseplate and a plurality of divider walls moveably mounted to said baseplate, wherein said divider walls control the relative flow ratios of said input stream to a first side portion, a center portion, and a second side portion of said drum.

41. (New) The assembly of claim 40 wherein said drum spins at 150 rpm or more.
42. (New) The assembly of claim 40 wherein said blades comprise a leading face with at least first and second face sections extending in different directions.
43. (New) The assembly of claim 40 wherein said arc is generally downwardly facing.
44. (New) The assembly of claim 40 wherein said drum has a core surface with a non-circular cross-section; said blades mounted to said core surface.
45. (New) The assembly of claim 40 further comprising a motor operatively connected to said drum and supplying rotational power thereto.
46. (New) The assembly of claim 40 further comprising a container for receiving said output.
47. (New) The assembly of claim 40 further comprising a motor operatively connected to said drum and supplying rotational power thereto, wherein:
 - said blades comprise a leading face with at least first and second face sections extending in different directions; and
 - said drum spins at 150 rpm or more.
48. (New) An assembly for processing wood chips, comprising:
 - a drum disposed so as to rotate about a generally horizontal axis and spinning at a rate of about 50 rpm or more, said drum including a plurality of outwardly extending blades;

wherein an output stream of wood chips from said drum covers an arc of more than 90° when viewed from a position along said horizontal axis spaced from said drum when an input stream of wood chips is fed to said drum; and

a feed chute disposed upstream from said drum and supplying said input stream of wood chips to said drum, wherein said feed chute comprises a baseplate and a plurality of divider walls moveably mounted to said baseplate, wherein said divider walls control the relative flow ratios of said input stream to a first side portion, a center portion, and a second side portion of said drum;

said output stream causing a pile of wood chips to be formed a packing density factor of at least 1.20.

49. (New) The assembly of claim 48 wherein said drum spins at 150 rpm or more.

50. (New) The assembly of claim 48 wherein said blades comprise a leading face with at least first and second face sections extending in different directions.

51. (New) The assembly of claim 48 wherein said arc is generally downwardly facing.

52. (New) The assembly of claim 48 further comprising a motor operatively connected to said drum and supplying rotational power thereto.

53. (New) The assembly of claim 48 further comprising a container for receiving said output.

54. (New) The assembly of claim 48 wherein said packing density factor is at least 1.25.

55. (New) The assembly of claim 48 further comprising a motor operatively connected to said drum and supplying rotational power thereto, wherein:

said blades comprise a leading face with at least first and second face sections extending in different directions;
said drum spins at 150 rpm or more.